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ABSTRACT

In this study, individual differences in internal-external control were expected to relate to several aspects of romantic, hetrosexual love. For example, it was hypothesized that proportionally fewer internals experience romantic attachments. Moreover, among persons having been in love, internals were expected to have fewer romantic experiences and to experience romantic attraction as less mysterious, less volatile and less intense than externals. Finally, internals were expected to have a less idealistic orientation toward romantic love than externals. Subjects consisted of 255 undergraduate introductory psychology students. These subjects completed Rotter's Internal External (I-E) Scale as well as a Romantic-Love Questionnaire specifically devised for this study. The results showed that internal-external control and sex of subject are relevant correlates of hetrosexual romantic love. The authors concluded that these results indicate the potential fruitfulness of correlation research on romantic love and its usefulness as an adjunct to experimentally-oriented and cross-cultural research approaches to this phenomenon. (Author)

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Correlates of Romantic Love

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Are certain persons more prone to experience romantic, heterosexual attraction than others? The present study addressed one aspect of this general question by investigating the personality dimension of internal-external control as a possible correlate of romantic love. According to Rotter (1966), this dimension reflects two opposing types of generalized expectations which individuals may possess concerning their personal efficacy as causal agents. Internals typically view events which affect them as being under their personal control; and they perceive contingencies between their actions and positive or negative outcomes. Externals, on the other hand, consider events affecting them as resulting from powerful, external forces beyond their personal control (e.g., luck, fate, etc). Accumulating research has related the personality variable of internal-external control to a wide variety of behavioral concomitants (cf. Rotter, 1966; 1967) including, more recently, interpersonal attraction between same-sex persons (Silverman & Shrauger, 1970; Davis & Taylor, 1971).

In the present study, individual differences in internal-external control were expected to relate to several aspects of romantic, heterosexual love. For example, it was hypothesized that proportionally fewer internals experience romantic attachments. Moreover, among persons having been in love, internals were expected to have fewer romantic experiences and to experience romantic attraction as less mysterious, less volatile and less intense than externals. Finally, internals were expected to have a less idealistic orientation toward romantic love than externals. These predictions stemmed from two perspectives.

One rationale emphasizes the cultural stereotype of romantic love as an external force which is allegedly intense, mysterious, and volatile and which reputedly engulfs the "fated" individuals in an idealized experience surpassing ordinary pleasures (Schon, 1963). If the cultural stereotype of romantic love defines it as an external force, internals may be less prone than externals to view heterosexual attraction as "love" because of their penchant for interpreting events in terms of "personal" causes. Moreover, assuming that internals are less sensitive to the cultural stereotype of love, they should be less prone to experience romantic attraction as a mysterious, volatile, intense and idealized experience.

An alternative perspective for the aforementioned predictions views social influence processes relating to interpersonal attraction as critical. It assumes that an individual's feelings of vulnerability and influencibility becomes more personally salient as interpersonal intimacy increases. If so, the greater aversion of internals to being influenced by others (cf. Rotter, 1966) may render them less susceptible than externals to experiencing romantic love. Moreover, internals are strongly oriented toward controlling others in interpersonal situations (e.g. Phares, 1965). In a heterosexual relationship, this manipulative orientation of internals might undermine the affective intensity of heterosexual attraction, endow it with a rational, "calculated" quality and detract from an idealistic orinetation toward love.

The present study also included sex of subject as another possible correlate of romantic love. Females were expected to be more susceptible to

experiencing romantic love than males on the assumptions that (a) the cultural stereotype of romantic love is probably more potent and personally salient for women, and (b) females are more submissive and susceptible to social influence. No specific predictions were made concerning sex differences in the nature of romantic-love experiences or attitudinal orientations toward love.

Method

Subjects

Two hundred and fifty-five undergraduates enrolled in Introductory Psychology at the University of Minnesota served as Ss and received points toward their final examination for participating.[1] Twelve Ss were excluded from the analyses.[2] This left a total of 243 Ss -- 127 males and 116 females.

Procedure

Ss completed Rotter's Internal-External (I-E) Scale as well as a Romantic-Love Questionnaire specifically devised for the present study. The two questionnaires were administered in different testing sessions about 2-4 wks. apart and with different experimenters for each session in order to minimize artifacts of personal and situational "sets" from influencing correlations between them. Typically, groups of 25-40 persons were tested in any given session.

The I-E Scale and the Romantic Love Questionnaire

The I-E Scale (cf. Rotter, 1966) contains 23 forced-choice items. On each item, respondents choose between a statement endorsing the inevitability of events (external) and another reflecting a belief in the perceived controllability of events (internal). This measure was scored in the external direction.

The Romantic Love Questionnaire consisted of several sections. The first section obtained information concerning various parameters of romantic love: viz., frequency, duration and intensity. It included items assessing whether or not the respondents had ever experienced heterosexual, romantic love; and if so, how many times, how intensely, and for how long. Ss indicated

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1 This study was conducted while the authors were associated with the Laboratory for Research in Social Relations at the University of Minnesota.

2 Five Ss failed to indicate their sex; seven other Ss did not complete all the items on the I-E scale.

3 Due to time pressures, fifty Ss completed both the Romantic Love Questionnaire and the I-E scale in the same testing session.

their frequency of romantic-love experiences in terms of the following categories: once, twice, three times, four times, five or more. These responses were scored in accord with their nominal values (e.g., 1,2,3, or 4)-- the last category being scored as 5. Intensity of romantic-love experiences was rated on a four-point scale ranging from "slightly intense" (scored 1) to "very intense" (scored 4). Finally, Ss indicated the duration of their love experiences in days and months; and these responses were coded in months or parts of a month.

The remainder of the Romantic Love Questionnaire assessed various dimensions of the respondents' subjective experience of romantic love. Specifically, the second section cited a list of emotional and behavioral symptoms commonly associated with the cultural stereotype of romantic love. The various symptoms were: 1) feeling of euphoria, 2) feelings of depression, 3) daydreaming, 4) difficulty sleeping, 5) more agitated and restless, and 6) decreased ability to concentrate. This section also included several behavioral symptoms unrelated to the cultural stereotype of romantic love. Ss indicated the extent to which they had experienced each symptom when in love on six-point rating scales ranging from 0 to 5. Another section requested Ss to rate their subjective experiences of romantic love on 23 bipolar, adjectival items. Each item included a 25-point rating scale and was scored -12 to +12. Finally, 16 Likert items guaged the respondents' attitudes toward romantic love.[4] The adjectival and attitude items were chosen to reflect dimensions of romantic love on which there were a priori expectations as well as to probe dimensions of romantic love other than the hypothesized ones.

Results

Scores on the I-E Scale were split at the common median for both sexes to differentiate internals and externals. Externals had scores of 11 and above; and internals, scores of 10 or below. For all analyses reported below, locus of control and sex of subject are independent of one another by chi-square tests.

Frequency of Romantic Love

Table 1 presents the frequency distribution of subjects' responses to whether they had ever experienced romantic love. To assess the previously mentioned hypotheses, a three-way chi-square analysis was performed on these responses using a procedure suggested by Sutcliffe (1957) for analyzing frequency data in a multiple-classification design and testing for interaction effects. As shown in Table 2, this analysis revealed two significant effects. First, there is a significant association between I-E and whether or not the respondents had ever experienced romantic love ($\chi^2 = 4.15$; 1 df; $p < .05$). As predicted, proportionally fewer internals than externals reported having experienced a romantic attachment. Second, sex of subject was also significantly associated with ever having been in love or not ($\chi^2 = 11.12$; 1 df; $p < .01$). Also in accord with predictions, proportionally more females than males reported having

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[4] The Likert items were drawn from a more comprehensive questionnaire devised by Professor Dunnette and his students at the University of Minnesota.

been in love. Moreover, the absence of a three-way interaction among I-E, sex of subject and having been in love (χ^2 = 1.70; 1 df; ns) indicates that the aforementioned effects are independent of one another.

As mentioned earlier, subjects who reported having been in love also indicated how many romantic attachments they had experienced.[5] A 2 (Internal vs. External) x 2(Male vs. Female) ANOVA was performed on individuals' reported frequencies of experiencing romantic love.[6] Contrary to prediction, internals did not differ from externals in their frequency of romantic-love experiences. Likewise, there was no main effect for sex[7], nor an interaction between locus of control and sex of subject.

Duration and Intensity of Romantic Love

Analysis of the duration scores revealed an interaction between locus of control and sex of subject (F = 5.85; df = 1,183; $p < .05$). Individual comparisons showed that among males, romantic love reputedly lasts longer for internals than for externals (F = 5.48; df = 1,183; $p < .05$). Moreover, among externals, females report a longer duration of romantic love than do males (F = 7.37; df = 1,183; $p < .01$). An ANOVA on reported intensity of romantic love, however, showed no effects.

These preceding analyses, however, may be somewhat misleading since questionnaire instructions requested those who had been in love more than once to indicate the average duration and the average intensity of their romantic-love experiences. To correct for this possible source of ambiguity, additional analyses on these measures were performed using only those subjects reporting a single experience of romantic love. In this case, analysis of reported duration showed no effects whatsoever; whereas a significant main effect for sex of subject occurred on the intensity dimension (F = 5.98; df = 1,103; $p < .05$). As might be expected, females report experiencing romantic love more intensely than males. Finally, it is interesting that duration and intensity of romantic love are positively correlated (r = .28; 105 df; $p < .01$) among these subjects. On the face of it, this finding seems to belie the viewpoint that intense, heterosexual love-experiences are necessarily short-lived.

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5 All remaining analyses exclude subjects who reported never having experienced romantic love. Excluding these subjects does not alter the independence of internal-external control and sex of subject (χ^2 = .45; 1 df; ns).

6 All ANOVA reported herein were performed with unweighted-means solutions because of unequal cell frequencies.

7 The absence of sex differences in the reported frequency of romantic-love experiences accords with prior findings by Kephart (1967) in this respect.

Subjective Experience of Romantic Love

The various measures of the subjective experience of romantic love -- viz., ratings of symptoms associated with romantic love, adjective ratings of the qualitative experience of romantic love, and Likert scales assessing attitudes towards love -- were separately factor analyzed to identify sets of items which cluster together.[8] The resultant "clusters" were used to form more comprehensive indices within each general class of measures. Items were incorporated within an index if their factor loadings exceeded 0.25. Index-scores for each subject were obtained by summing individuals' scores on items comprising the index. These index scores were then analyzed by means of 2 x 2 ANOVA.

Ratings of symptoms

Factor analysis revealed one factor accounting for 32% of the total variance among the intercorrelated ratings of symptoms. All six symptoms had sufficiently high loadings and were, therefore, all incorporated within a composite index. An ANOVA on this index, however, revealed no significant effects.[9]

Adjective ratings of romantic love

There were five factors accounting for 30% of the total variance among the intercorrelated adjective ratings. Table 3 presents the rotated factor matrix and indentifies with asterisks those items comprising the various indices.[10] Analyses of variance showed main effects for locus of control on both the rational-love and volatile-love indices ($F = 4.20$; $df = 1,195$; $p < .05$; $F = 3.01$; $df = 1,195$; $p = .08$). As predicted, internals rated their subjective experience of romantic love as less emotional and less volatile than externals. There were no main effects for/nor any interactions with/ sex of subject on these latter indices. The passionate-love index did, however, reveal an interaction between locus of control and sex of subject ($F = 4.10$; $df = 1,195$; $p < .05$). Counter to

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8 Factoring consisted of principal-component analyses with varimax rotation. Rotations were performed according to a Kaiser criterion such that factors with eigenvalues less than 1.0 were not included in the rotations.

9 There were, nevertheless, effects on single items that deserve mention. For example, consistent with findings on the intensity dimension, females also report feeling more euphoric than males while in love ($F = 19.14$; $df = 1,192$; $p < .01$). Also interesting, significant crossover interactions were obtained on reported feelings of depression and anxiety as well as difficulty sleeping while in love ($F = 3.92$; $df = 1,192$; $p < .05$; $F = 4.07$; $df = 1,192$; $p < .05$, respectively). Individual comparisons show that among males, internals report stronger feelings of depression and anxiety as well as greater difficulty sleeping than externals; whereas among females, the reverse is found.

10 Items with negative factor coefficients were reversed in their scoring before being summed with other items to form indices.

expectations, individual comparisons show only that among males, internals tend to view their romantic-love experiences as more passionate than externals (F = 3.47; df = 1,195; p = .07). The circumspect-love and impetuous-love indices showed no significant effects.

Attitudes toward romantic love

Factor analysis of the attitude scales revealed three factors accounting for 21% of the total variance. Table 4 presents the rotated factor matrix. An ANOVA on the idealistic-love index revealed main effects for both locus of control and sex of subject (F = 3.69; df = 1,194; p = .06; and F = 4.71; df = 1,194; $p < .05$ respectively). As expected, internals tend to disagree more with an idealistic view of romantic love than externals. Moreover, females opposed an idealistic view of love more strongly than did males. Analyses of the cynical-love and pragmatic-love indices showed only main effects for sex of subject (F = 3.98; df = 1,194; $p < .05$; and F = 8.11; df = 1,194; $p < .01$, respectively). They reveal that females disagree more with a cynical view of love but express greater agreement with a pragmatic orientation toward love than do males.

Discussion

Locus of Control and Romantic Love

It will be recalled that several hypotheses concerning the relationship between internal-external control and romantic love were derived from both an interpretation emphasizing social influence processes and also the viewpoint that the cultural stereotype of romantic love portrays it as an external force. As predicted from these perspectives, internals were less likely than externals to have ever experienced romantic love. Also, as anticipated, the subjective experience of romantic love by internally-controlled persons does seem to depart from the cultural stereotype of love. They experience romantic attraction as less mysterious and less volatile than externals. Moreover, they more strongly oppose an idealistic view of love than do externals. On the other hand, the results of the present study countered two predictions: specifically, frequency and intensity of romantic-love experiences did not vary as a function of internal vs. external control. Nevertheless, initial expectations concerning locus of control were generally supported.

Assuming that the respondents' reports are reasonably veridical, these correlational findings have several implications. They constitute another indication of the validity of the I-E construct, in that externals are apparently more susceptible to the "external", cultural definition of romantic attraction. They add to accumulating evidence linking internal-external control and interpersonal attraction -- whether between same-sex persons (Silverman & Shrauger, 1970; Davis & Taylor, 1971) or more intense forms of heterosexual attraction such as romantic love. Finally, they call into question recent speculations (Levinger, Senn & Jorgensen, 1970) that the predictive utility of "individual-oriented", personality measures decrease as the strength of interpersonal attraction increases.

Sex Differences in Romantic Love

Sex of subject also correlated with various dimensions of romantic love. Proportionally more females than males report having experienced romantic love. In addition, females disagree more than males with both idealistic and cynical

attitudes towards love but express greater agreement than males with a pragmatic orientation. The sex difference obtained for reported frequency of romantic love accords with the viewpoint that the cultural stereotype of romantic love is more potent for women than men. Women seem to be more susceptible than men to this type of sociocultural influence. The results obtained on the attitudinal items and adjective ratings of romantic love do not, however, fit with this interpretation. If females are more susceptible to the cultural stereotype of romantic attraction, they should exhibit greater agreement (or at least disagree less) with an idealistic orientation towards love than males. They do not. Furthermore, females might be expected to report subjective experiences of romantic love which more closely approximate the cultural stereotype of love. Females should therefore describe more mysterious, intense and volatile love experiences than males. They do not.

The obtained sex differences do seem to accord, however, with prior sociological speculations (Kephart, 1967; Rosenblatt, 1970) emphasizing a functionalistic interpretation of romantic love. Working from a cross-cultural perspective, Rosenblatt suggests that romantic love is one of several types of bonds for consolidating men and women in marriage. Presumably, romantic love is most efficacious as a basis for marriage when division of labor by sex is unequal. Under these circumstances, the sex which contributes least to economic subsistense has the most to gain from a system where marriage is based on romantic love. It can be argued that in many segments of contemporary North American society, the female contributes less to economic subsistence in marriage and hence should be more likely to value romantic love as a basis for marriage, though not for idealistic, sociocultural reasons. Rosenblatt argues that for females, romantic love becomes a means of inducing males into marriage since other bonds which unite a couple, such as economic interdependence, are absent.

Many of the present results can be interpreted from this functionalistic viewpoint. First, the greater instrumental importance of love for women suggests that females are more likely than males to report having experienced love, as they do in the present study. Second, although females were found to be less idealistic in their attitudes towards love than were males, they were also less cynical about romantic attraction. In other words, females were less likely than males to favor abolishing love as a basis for marriage. Finally, females admitted to a more pragmatic orientation than males, one suggesting the possibility of multiple romantic experiences. This last perspective might be interpreted as: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

Summary

In conclusion, the present study shows that internal-external control and sex of subject are indeed relevant correlates of heterosexual romantic love. Locus of control and sex, respectively, were associated with the frequency of persons having experienced romantic love and also correlated with attitudes towards love. Moreover, in several respects, internals reported qualitatively different, subjective experiences of romantic love than externals. Taken together, these results would seem to indicate the potential fruitfulness of correlational research on romantic love and its usefulness as an adjunct to experimentally-oriented and cross-cultural research approaches to this phenomenon.

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Table 1

Frequency Distribution for Chi-Square Analysis

of Romantic Love

		Perceived Locus of Control			
		Internally-controlled		Externally-controlled	
		Love	No Love	Love	No Love
Sex	Male	42	21	52	12
	Female	42	5	63	6
	Totals	84	26	115	18

Table 2

Partition of Chi-Square for Romantic Love

Source	df	χ^2
S(Sex) X L(Love)	1	11.12*
I-E(Internal vs. External Control)X L	1	4.15**
S X I-E	1	1.99
S X I-E X L	1	1.70
Total	4	18.96

* $p < .001$

** $p < .05$

Table 3

Rotated Factor Matrix of
Adjective Ratings of Romantic Love

Adjectival Ratings	Factor I (Volatile Love)	Factor II (Circumspect Love)	Factor III (Rational Love)	Factor IV (Passionate Love)	Factor V (Impetuous Love)
Slow-fast	.08	-.23	-.09	.17	.59*
Sophisticated-naive	.09	.18	-.37*	-.05	-.22
subtle-vivid	.17	-.63*	.04	.11	.11
predictable-unpredictable	.39*	.00	-.36*	.06	.08
tense-relaxed	-.32*	-.12	.10	-.08	-.01
light-hearted-solemn	.03	.02	.08	-.008	-.01
usual-unusual	.14	.005	-.12	.01	.01
direct-subtle	.13	.68*	.004	-.12	-.15
impulsive-deliberate	-.13	.003	.33*	.01	-.33*
cautious-adventurous	.05	-.46*	-.19	.02	.40*
logical-intuitive	.09	-.08	-.62*	.03	.15
long-short	.47*	.11	-.03	.09	.18
systematic-unsystematic	.18	.02	-.61*	.03	.03
changing-steady	-.58*	.08	.12	-.01	-.08
delicate-rugged	.02	-.02	-.06	.03	.07
sensual-intellectual	.005	.11	.12	-.65*	-.06
active-passive	.12	.42*	.08	-.38*	-.19
spiritual-physical	.09	-.12	.07	.55*	.14
controllable-uncontrollable	.13	.003	-.25*	.22	.17
emotional-rational	-.01	.07	.45*	-.38*	-.02
slowly developing-sudden	.16	-.16	-.03	.10	.61*
mysterious-understandable	-.42*	.01	.15	.03	-.02
ribald-sublime	-.08	-.003	.06	-.21	.004

Table 4

Rotated Factor Matrix of Attitudes Toward Romantic Love

Attitude-Items	Factor I (Idealistic View of Love)	Factor II (Cynical View of Love)	Factor III (Pragmatic View of Love)
1) True love is known at once by the parties involved	.37*	.11	.10
2) There is only one real love for a person	.51*	-.02	-.40*
3) There's no room in modern marriage for the old idea of romance	.01	.64*	-.06
4) True love leads to almost perfect happiness	.51*	-.01	-.21
5) Doubt may enter into real love	-.14	.07	.18
6) Romantic love is an outmoded and unrealistic concept	-.04	.66*	.01
7) People marry as often for things like money, status etc. as for love	-.12	-.03	.04
8) Conflict can be a real part of love	-.001	.03	.04
9) It is possible to love two people at the same time	-.13	-.04	.55*
10) True love is mysterious and cannot be explained by reason. It can be felt, not explained.	.32*	-.16	-.00
11) When one is in love, he or she lives almost entirely for the other person	.50*	-.12	-.19
12) Love constrains one's independence too much.	.14	.16	.06
13) Even if a previous love affair was not as strong as a present one, it may still have been real love	-.07	-.01	.57*
14) True love lasts forever	.47*	.01	-.15
15) Love goes out of marriage after a few years	-.02	.17	-.01
16) Sex destroys or undermines the extent of romantic love between 2 persons	.12	.21	.03